



Meridian Public School District

Office of the Superintendent

1019 25th Avenue
Meridian, MS 39301

(601) 484-4915

(601) 485-4818

Dr. Amy Carter

amcarter@mpsdk12.net

July 7, 2022

Aria S. Vaughan
Natane Singleton
U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division
Educational Opportunities Section
4 Constitution Square
150 M Street, NE | Suite 10.1117
Washington, DC 20002

Natasha C. Merle
John Cusick
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
40 Rector Street, 5th floor
New York, NY 10006

Dear Counsel:

The purpose of this communication is to inform you of the district's intention to consolidate middle school campuses in Meridian Public School District. Currently, the district is operating three middle school campuses with under 1,000 students housed at Carver Middle School, Magnolia Middle School, and Northwest Middle School.

In the past, Meridian has been creative in its approach to addressing staffing at all schools by implementing programs such as Grow Your Own, signing bonuses, smaller classroom sizes, and support for non-certified teachers.

Although teacher recruitment is a challenge for schools across the nation, it's especially been a challenge for Carver Middle School. For the 2022-23 school year, Carver Middle School is currently projected to have 11 vacancies of its 25 staffing positions despite the efforts of the current administration to recruit qualified teachers.

As a result, I have recommended that the Board create a single middle school structure that will operate across two campuses. Under this plan, Carver's students will be reassigned to Magnolia Middle and Northwest Middle Schools serving students in grades 6 through 8 within re-drawn attendance zones. The mascot will be the same for each school, the Magnolia Wildcats and Northwest Wildcats. Both schools are fully staffed so that no middle school student will start the year with a long-term substitute.

**PLAINTIFFS
EXHIBIT**

P-1

The Board felt it was educationally sound and made economic and practical sense to close one school and to re-draw attendance zones to support one middle school across two campuses. The Board unanimously approved the closure of Carver during its meeting on May 26, 2022, and directed me to seek approval from the Court to reassign Carver’s students to Magnolia and Northwest Middle School. This reorganization will “be done in a manner which will prevent the recurrence of the dual school structure” The 2021-2022 enrollment data of each of the District’s middle schools follows:

SCHOOL	BLACK	WHITE	OTHER	TOTAL
Carver Middle	262 (95.6%)	5 (1.8%)	7 (2.6%)	274
Magnolia Middle	259 (88.7%)	13 (4.5%)	20 (6.8%)	292
Northwest Middle	398 (92.6%)	14 (3.2%)	18 (4.2%)	430

The projected middle school enrollment for 2022-2023 is:

SCHOOL	BLACK	WHITE	OTHER	TOTAL
Magnolia Middle	437 (93.2%)	8 (1.7%)	24 (5.1%)	469
Northwest Middle	529 (92.2%)	25 (4.3%)	20 (3.5%)	574

The District, with the guidance of its routing software company, has created two middle school attendance zones. A map of the new zones is attached. The District will present its proposed motion for your consideration before it is submitted to the Court. Of course, time is of the essence. Please let us know your position on this matter as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Amy Carter

Dr. Amy J. Carter
Superintendent of Education

[illegible]

EXHIBIT NO. P-2
CAUSE NO. 4:65CV1300
WITNESS _____
CLERK: JB

AUG 11 2022

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI
FJ, REPORTER